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POSTAL RATE COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

POSTAL RATE COMMISSION

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POSTAL RATE AND FEE CHANGES, 2000

DOCKET NO. R2000-1

Direct Testimony of

Rosemary Wells

On Behalf of the

ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN PUBLISHERS

DATED: May 22, 2000

Communications with respect to this document should be sent to:

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**DIRECT TESTIMONY OF ROSEMARY WELLS ON
BEHALF OF ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN PUBLISHERS**

My name is Rosemary Wells. I am an author and illustrator of over 60 children's books.

I have created children's characters such as Max and Ruby, Noisy Nora, Yoko and McDuff in books such as *Max's First Word*, *Max's Chocolate Chicken*, *Bunny Cakes*, *Noisy Nora*, *Yoko and McDuff Moves In*. I also have produced a series of books that introduce young children to traditional nursery rhymes, including *Here Comes Mother Goose* and *My First Mother Goose*. In my 30 years as an author, I have won numerous awards for my work in children's literature, including more than 20 American Library Association Notable Book citations, the New York Times Book Review Best Illustrated Book of the Year Award, and the Boston Globe – Horn Book Award. I also am a long-time advocate of children's literacy. A brief biography and list of books that I have published is found in Attachment-1 to my Testimony.

1. Reason for My Testimony

Many of my books are published by Scholastic Inc., a member of the Association of American Publishers ("AAP"). I understand that the Postal Service is requesting that the rates for "Bound Printed Matter" be raised by as much as 26%. I also understand that one of the important ways in which my books reach children is through the mail, and that such mail is often sent at Bound Printed Matter rates.

I have reviewed the testimony of Patricia Schroeder, the President of AAP. I support Ms. Schroeder's testimony wholeheartedly, and want to explain to the Commission specifically the effect that my books – and the books of other children's authors – have on the health and well-being of the children of our nation. I also want to stress the importance of children's literacy as

1 an underlying value of our society. I believe that these values must be taken into account when
2 determining the appropriate postal rates for books sent as Bound Printed Matter.

3 2. Children's Books Are Critical to the Health
4 and Well-being of Our Nation's Children
5

6 A children's book is not merely "Bound Printed Matter" but a gateway to a world of
7 learning, understanding and pleasure for children. Any parent or grandparent who has seen the
8 wonder in a child's eyes when they open a new book for the first time knows this. Books
9 stimulate a child to form their own pictures in the mind and thereby foster their imagination.
10 Books create a shared experience between a parent and child, leading to better bonding and
11 caregiving. They invite active response and communication and teach a child to repeat and
12 practice language. Sharing books with children encourages them to associate books, reading and
13 language with a loving and nurturing environment. Fundamentally, books instill values and
14 experiences beyond mass culture – they furnish a child's mind with permanent ideas and images.
15 They are critical not only to the intellectual development of the individual child but also to the
16 health of our nation's children as a whole.

17 In 1997, I wrote a book, *Read to Your Bunny*, which conveys the importance of reading.
18 I wrote it in conjunction with the campaign of the Association of Booksellers for Children to
19 encourage parents to read to their children for 20 minutes a day. Using this book, Scholastic, the
20 American Booksellers Association and the Association of Booksellers for Children also took part
21 in the "Prescription for Reading" Program." Pediatricians were encouraged to give a
22 "prescription" to parents which could be redeemed at local bookstores for a free copy of my
23 book. The program also served as a basis for encouraging pediatricians to explain to parents that

reading to children is part of routine pediatric care, much in the way that pediatricians provide advice regarding nutrition, immunizations and child-safety.

3. Higher Rates for Sending Books Through the Mail Conflicts
With Goals That Childhood Reading Seeks to Promote

Books are part of the basic fabric of our nation. They promote our values as a society. Our children learn by example, and what better way to teach than through books. Our national institutions should advance children's reading and not undermine it. It makes perfect sense that Congress would have enacted a law that requires that postal rates for mail used to distribute books receive special consideration. Based on Ms. Schroeder's testimony, I understand that such a requirement does exist.

I am shocked to learn that the Postal Service has decided that the rates for sending books through the mail need to be increased by staggering amounts. I am concerned that these rate increases will hurt the efforts that I and others have undertaken to encourage childhood reading. These consequences of the Postal Service's proposed rate increases may be unintended, but they could have long and lasting effects on our nation's children. I urge the Commission carefully to consider the value of books, particularly books for our children, which are sent as Bound Printed Matter as it conducts the proceeding on the proposed rate increases.

★ ★ Meet Rosemary Wells ★ ★

Rosemary Wells was born in New York City and grew up on the New Jersey Shore. Most of her childhood was spent outdoors at a time when New Jersey was still small farms and miles of woods. Her mother was a dancer in the Russian Ballet, and her father a playwright and actor. Mrs. Wells says, "Both my parents flooded me with books and stories. My grandmother took me on special trips to the theater and museums in New York.



When I was two years old I began to draw and they saw right away the career that lay ahead of me and encouraged me every day of my life. As far back as I can remember, I did nothing but draw."



Rosemary Wells attended Boston Museum School and married in her early twenties. She began her career in children's books working as a designer at Macmillan in New York, and it was there that she published her first book, an illustrated edition of Gilbert & Sullivan's *I Have a Song to Sing-O*.



Rosemary Wells's career as an author and illustrator spans more than 30 years and 60 books. She has won numerous awards, and has given readers such unforgettable characters as Max and Ruby, Noisy Nora, and Yoko. She has also given Mother Goose new life in two enormous, definitive editions, published by Candlewick; the second is due to be published in fall 1999.



Many times when speaking, Mrs. Wells is asked where her ideas come from. She usually answers, "It's a writer's job to have ideas." Sometimes an idea comes from something she reads or hears about, as in the case of her recent book, *Mary on Horseback*, a story based on the life of Mary Breckenridge, who founded the Frontier Nursing Service. But more often, books appear from everyday incidents in her life. She says, "Authors are accomplished eavesdroppers, and have wonderful selective memory." Timothy Goes to School, for example was based on an incident in which her daughter was teased for wearing the wrong clothes to a Christmas concert. Her dogs, west highland terriers, Lucy and Snowy, work their way into her drawings in expression and body position.



Mrs. Wells says, "Most of my books use animals rather than children as characters. People always ask why. There are many reasons. First, I draw animals more easily and amusingly than I do children. Animals are broader in range--age, time, and place--than children are. They also can do things in pictures that children cannot. They can be slapstick and still real, rough and still funny, maudlin and still touching.

In *Benjamin and Tulip*, Tulip falls out of a tree and mashes Benjamin in the mud. If these pictures were of children, they would be too close to violent reality for comfort, and all the humor would be lost."



BOOKS & PUBLISHERS

FAMILY

Here Comes Mother Goose, 9/99



Candlewick Press

My Very First Mother Goose, 8/96



Candlewick Press

Read to Your Bunny, 2/97

Scholastic Press

Voyage to the Bunny Planet, 9/92:

First Tomato

The Island Light

Moss Pillows

Penguin Putnam Books for Young Readers

The Christmas Mystery, by Jostein Gaarder, 11/96

Farrar, Straus & Giroux

BOARD BOOKS

Pussycat, Pussycat: And Other Rhymes, 11/97
Humpty Dumpty: And other Rhymes, 1/97
Wee Willie Winkie: And other Rhymes, 11/97
Little Boy Blue: And other Rhymes, 11/97
Candlewick Press

Bunny Reads Back Series:
Old MacDonald, 2/98
Itsy Bitsy Spider, 8/98
The Bear Went Over the Mountain, 9/98
Bingo, 9/98
Scholastic Press

Max's First Word, 1/98
Max's Bath, 3/98
Max's Birthday, 1/98
Max's Bedtime, 3/98
Max's New Suit, 1/98
Max's Ride, 3/98
Max's Toys, 3/98
Max's Breakfast, 1/98
Penguin Putnam Books for Young Readers

Jack and the Beanstalk, (illustrated by Norman Messenger), 9/97
Dorling Kindersley

YOUNGER PICTURE BOOKS

Yoko, 9/98



[REVIEW]

McDuff Series (illustrated by Susan Jeffers)



McDuff Moves In, 4/97

McDuff Comes Home, 4/97

McDuff and the Baby, 10/97

McDuff's New Friend, 9/98

Hyperion Books for Children:

Bunny Cakes, 2/97

Bunny Money, 9/97

Max and Ruby's First Greek Myth: Pandora's Box, 7/98

Max and Ruby's Midas: Another Greek Myth, 4/95

Max's Dragon Shirt, 12/96

Max's Christmas, 7/96

Max's Chocolate Chicken, 3/89

Voyage to the Bunny Planet, 9/92:

First Tomato

The Island Light

Moss Pillows

Penguin Putnam Books for Young Readers

Edward Unready for School, 9/95

Edward in Deep Water, 9/95

Edward's Overwhelming Overnight, 9/95

Benjamin and Tulip, 1/77

Don't Spill it Again, James, 12/77

Fritz and the Mess Fairy, 1/96

Hazel's Amazing Mother, 8/89,

The Fisherman and His Wife, (illustrated by Eleanor Hubbard), 7/98

Morris's Disappearing Bag, 6/78,

Night Sounds, Morning Colors, (illustrated by David McPhail), 9/94

Noisy Nora, 5/97

Shy Charles, 4/92

Stanley and Rhoda, 1/81

Timothy Goes to School, 6/81

Penguin Putnam Books for Young Readers

Available in Spanish:

Eduardo Cumpleanos En La Piscina, Santillana Pub Co, 6/96

Eduardo El Primer Dia De Colegio, Santillana Pub Co, 11/97

Lucas Y Virginia, Altea S A Ediciones, 6/81

La Estupenda Mama de Roberta, Santillana Pub Co., 12/95

El Saco De esaparecer, Altea S A Ediciones, 6/84

Nora La Revoltosa, 7/97

Julieta Estate Quieta, 5/95

Chut, Chut, Charlotte!, 5/90 (Schoenhofs Foreign Books)

Timoteo va a la Escuela, Altea S A Ediciones, 12/95

Penguin Putnam Books for Young Readers

Tell me a Trudy (by Lore Segal), 7/77

Farrar, Straus & Giroux

OLDER PICTURE BOOKS

**Rachel Field's "Hitty, Her First Hundred Years",
a new edition by Rosemary Wells (illustrated by Susan Jeffers)**

Forest of Dreams, (illustrated by Susan Jeffers), 10/88
The Little Lame Prince, (orig. by Dinah Maria Mulock Craik), 8/90

The Language of Doves, (illustrated by Greg Shedd), 9/96

Lucy Comes to Stay (illustrated by Mark Graham), 5/94

Waiting for the Evening Star, (illustrated by Susan Jeffers), 10/97

Penguin Putnam Books for Young Readers

MIDDLE READERS

Mary On Horseback: Three Mountain Stories, (illustrated by Peter McCarty), 8/98

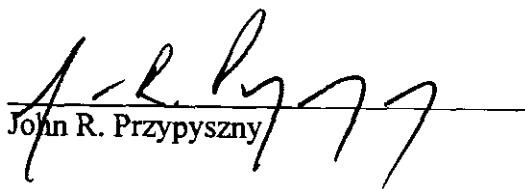


Lassie Come Home (original by Eric Knight, illustrated by Susan Jeffers), 8/95
Henry Holt

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that I have this date served the foregoing document, by First-Class Mail,
upon the participants in this proceeding.

Date: May 22, 2000


John R. Przypyszny